Since 1983, Hamilton Community Health Network has served as the home for affordable, compassionate healthcare for thousands of area residents. As a federally qualified health center (FQHC) and patient-centered medical home offering a comprehensive array of healthcare services throughout Genesee and Lapeer counties, our dedicated team of over 200 health professionals includes more than 40 providers specializing in primary care and family medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, optometry, oral health, podiatry, behavioral health and psychiatry. We are committed to providing care to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, truly making Hamilton the region’s home for HEALTH care.
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2022 Impact Report from Hamilton Community Health Network. This last year has been challenging with coronavirus (COVID-19), RSV, influenza, and staffing shortages. Despite the challenges, Hamilton was able to strengthen our staff, increase our visibility, and expand our commitment to the patients we serve by providing quality, affordable health care services in the Genesee and Lapeer communities that we proudly serve.

The coronavirus created a pandemic that caused significant damage to our economy and our health care system. We saw improvements with vaccines and boosters, but we continued to struggle with our patient population getting tested and vaccinated. We expanded vaccination and testing sites, increased the number of behavioral health providers, community health workers, outreach staff, medical providers, and dental providers. We were also able to expand our services by utilizing new technology to enhance telehealth access, which has increased our ability to serve patients remotely, and we launched a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. Plus, we have continued to expand our ability to serve non-English speaking patients by partnering with local agencies and virtual interpretation providers that offer interpretation and American Sign Language services for patients to access during appointments at Hamilton.

This year also provided many opportunities to work with our community partners to collaborate on COVID-19 vaccines and flu shots, plus health and wellness outreach activities that were back in full swing after the COVID-19 hiatus. Multiple partnering health insurers were instrumental in several events for our patients and their members. We also hosted Senator Debbie Stabenow, Mayor Sheldon Neeley, and representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, Joint Commission on Accreditation and the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) in our clinics. We received our Joint Commission Accreditation for three more years.

In reflection, this has been a year of persistence and progress. I am proud of the dedication the Hamilton team demonstrated in service to our patients and the community at-large. The last few years have shown the true grit and passion our team has for our community and our patients. There is no place I would rather be than here at Hamilton Community Health Network, your home for healthcare.

Sincerely,
Clarence R. Pierce, CEO
Hamilton Community Health Network provided medical care to over 22,000 patients in 2022. From newborns to seniors, our commitment to the community to provide the highest quality of care to everyone regardless of ability to pay transcends our purpose and mission. As a medical care home, we work to assist our patients to overcome income, geographic, cultural, language, and other barriers to care. Our clinics are located along bus routes and within walking distance of residential areas, making healthcare not only affordable, but accessible to many individuals and families who may otherwise delay care.

One family who was looking for a pediatrician for their newborn twins based on location and high-quality care is the Bacherts. Living in downtown Flint, Hamilton’s Main Clinic at 2900 North Saginaw was not only easy to get to, but is also the location of Maria Bernabe, MD, a pediatrician who has been practicing at Hamilton for nine years. Evangeline and Prya, the Bachert’s twins, began seeing Dr. Bernabe when they were just a few days old. During that first visit, Mom and Dad began the recommended series of well-child visits and were given instructions on nutrition and the girls’ health priorities. Dr. Bernabe starts talking about wellness and prevention on day one with her patients. Dr. Bernabe says treating patients at Hamilton is about comprehensive healthcare, not just a prescription. In fact, Hamilton received recognition as a patient-centered medical home (PCMH) from the Joint Commission again in 2022. Being a PCMH we focus on providing care as a team, even for our youngest patients.

For example, if a child is showing signs of calcium or vitamin deficiency, it may be a result of food insecurity. At Hamilton, patients are easily connected to a health educator or community health worker who will then meet with the patient or family to assist in making linkages to help resolve issues beyond the exam room that affect a person’s health. In this instance, the community health worker could connect the family to community resources such as the local food bank, in addition to other public assistance programs.

“A prescription doesn’t solve all health problems. That is why it is important to think outside of the box sometimes.”

- Maria Bernabe, MD
Hamilton’s dental program meets a unique need in our community, expanding access to care for the underserved. Our dental providers are trained to care for higher amounts of oral disease, dental caries, or cavities, and delayed oral care. Poor oral health can often lead to health issues beyond cavities and toothaches, and because of this Hamilton provides dental services at three locations throughout the community (Main Dental Clinic, Burton Dental Clinic, and Dental North Clinic).

At Hamilton’s Main Dental and Burton Dental locations, routine dental services for adults and children in the community are integrated into primary care settings within our community health centers. Hamilton’s primary care providers and clinical staff have received training on performing oral health screenings, identifying the need for dental referrals to meet the overall needs of our patients while they are in the clinic, whether it’s for a medical visit or an oral exam.

“By working together with the clinical team, we are able to catch issues before they become major problems and discuss healthy choices,” explained Anya Harris, DDS, Director of Dental Services at Hamilton.

In 2022, Hamilton dentists provided nearly 13,000 dental visits, meeting the needs of patients that many other private practice dentists are not able to meet. As a federally qualified health center, Hamilton dental services are available to all community members, and offer a sliding fee scale based on income and ability to pay.

Oral health is a window to overall health.”

– Anya Harris, DDS
Like many health centers Hamilton continues to expand its services beyond primary and preventive care to include mental health, substance use disorder, and other behavioral health issues. Throughout 2022, Hamilton expanded its Behavioral Health Department and created a new hub at our North Pointe Clinic. There we welcomed back Albert Ujkaj, LMSW, who was on sabbatical for the last year, and Susan Carston, LMSW. We were also fortunate to welcome on board Shuntai Walker, LPC, and Stephanie Rosum, LMSW, to our established team. Eraina Poole, LMSW, Antonia Perry, LMSW, and Tauheed Hasan, LPC, round out the behavioral health team.

As the community needs for mild to moderate behavioral health services and therapy continues to grow, Hamilton’s medical providers and behavioral health team have developed creative ways to work together. From ‘warm-hand-offs’ to friendly referrals, patients in the exam rooms are routinely encouraged to engage to care for both physical and mental health.

One local patient who cannot praise her Hamilton team enough is Jenita, a patient of Mr. Ujkaj and Donald Robinson, MD. Born and raised in Flint, Jenita found herself dealing with several complicated health issues and more dead ends than answers when visiting doctor’s offices.

“No other doctor but Dr. Robinson listened to me or tried to figure out what was wrong with me. That’s all that I’ve ever wanted,” said Jenita.

Once the physical health issues were being treated, Dr. Robinson suggested the support of a licensed therapist, and Jenita began seeing Albert Ujkaj. “Without Albert to talk to, well... without him to talk to, I might not be here today.”

“Everyone is going through something. Being able to voice what it is makes a difference in your mindfulness and helps you move forward.”

– Albert Ujkaj, LMSW, MBA
Medication and taking it as prescribed is an integral part of a patient’s healthcare routine. In fact, nearly 66% of U.S. adults take at least one prescribed medication according to the Health Policy Institute. The same holds true here at Hamilton, with the majority of our patients taking at least one prescription drug.

Chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, or arthritis are often diagnosed chronic diseases that require consistent management and adherence to prescribed medications. This also makes them the more expensive diseases to manage, and therefore it’s often these patients that tend to stretch their medication, according to Pharmacist Cynthia Bolden-Howard at Hamilton Community Health Network’s Main Clinic.

The cost of prescription drugs is a significant burden in the United States. To combat this, Congress created the 340B Drug Pricing Program in 1992 to protect safety-net healthcare providers like Hamilton from escalating drug prices by allowing them to purchase outpatient drugs at a discount from manufacturers, allowing for comprehensive care for many uninsured and low-income patients. Because of Section 340B, Hamilton Community Health Network is able to work with our patients when it comes to managing their medication needs. This allows some flexibility for patients when it comes to medication access, including lower costs.

When someone skips a dose, or multiple doses, it can lead to complications in treating an illness or a chronic issue.”

– Cynthia Bolden-Howard, RPH
Hamilton Community Health Network's Outreach Team was excited to get back into the community in full force in 2022 after two years of navigating COVID-19 restrictions. The team thrives on making connections and having meaningful conversations with residents, community partners, as well as participating in enriching community events. Events ranged from food giveaways to music festivals, as well as several health fairs, such as Hamilton’s own National Health Center Week held each August. Events hosted by Hamilton were made possible by our partners such as Molina Healthcare of Michigan, Health Alliance Plan, and more.

There was also a fundamental effort to continuing serving as a community leader administering life-saving COVID-19 and flu vaccines in 2022, especially as new COVID-19 booster shots became available. Hamilton’s Outreach Team regularly visited community organizations such as Greater Holy Temple, Hasselbring Senior Center, Center for Hope, Flint Housing Commission apartment locations, and other community-based organizations throughout Genesee and Lapeer counties to support a continuing COVID-19 response.
Central to Hamilton’s role of providing access to care for the underserved, our outreach team is dedicated to engaging residents impacted by challenges such as being uninsured as well as those who are housing insecure or homeless.

Health insurance is often taken for granted by many Americans as it’s often tied to employment. However, for many who work part time, are unemployed, or have lost coverage, getting health insurance can often be a struggle. In fact, approximately 7% of Genesee County residents, including 2% of children, are currently without health insurance. Hamilton’s Lead Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator is a certified insurance navigator and is available to work with any community resident to assist with their health insurance options. As Hamilton’s expert on health insurance enrollment, he along with members of the outreach team provide free insurance enrollment assistance, health insurance education, community-wide enrollment events, coverage to care and follow up, and assistance after you sign up. Don’t go without coverage – Hamilton is here to help.

In addition to insurance coverage, poor housing or lack of consistent housing has a direct impact on a person’s overall health. Whether it’s difficulty paying rent, overcrowded living conditions, eviction, or homelessness, housing insecurity exposes individuals and families to increased stress and mental and physical health problems. That is where our Homeless Outreach Coordinator, Dwayne Clemons, comes in. Visiting homeless shelters, walking the streets around the community, and connecting with anyone who may be at risk of being homeless is Dwayne’s focus. Dwayne explained “Everyone’s health starts at home. If you don’t have a home, your health is not a top priority – finding a roof is.”

The priority of Hamilton’s Homeless Program is to offer healthcare as many families and individuals struggling with housing issues often forgo visiting the doctor. Our Hamilton-Flint Clinic on Root Street inside Center for Hope is dedicated to homeless outreach and healthcare access for the homeless. We offer full-service healthcare for those who may be visiting the Warming Center, grabbing lunch, or just in the area.
In October, 2022, we were excited to welcome United States Senator Debbie Stabenow, D-MI, to Hamilton when she stopped by to celebrate the passing of the Inflation Reduction Act – a monumental piece of federal legislation that will bring cost relief to many Americans and Hamilton patients who are on Medicare.

Beginning in 2023, out-of-pocket expenses for insulin will be capped at $35 per month for all Medicare patients. Meaning that one in every three Medicare patients who have diabetes, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, will no longer have extremely high co-pays for a life-saving drug.

Inflation Reduction Act will also:
- Allow Medicare to negotiate medication prices; cut costs for over 2 million Michiganders who rely on Medicare
- Cap Medicare beneficiaries’ out-of-pocket costs at $2K/year
- Allow people to spread their out-of-pocket costs over monthly payments
- Provide free Medicare coverage for all vaccines
- Penalizes drug companies for price hikes that are higher than inflation
- Lowers costs for people who purchase insurance through the ACA marketplace

“Insulin was created in Canada hundreds of years ago and shared for free because its discoverers thought it was selfish to charge for something that would save lives.”

– U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow
Clinical preceptors play a key role in the education of Physician Assistant students as they provide valuable training to the next generation of physician assistants. Preceptors are role models and teachers that help students improve their skills in patient care, clinical procedures, preventative medicine, and patient education.

David has been with Hamilton Community Health Network since 2006 and a preceptor for 15 years. He was recently recognized by the University of Michigan-Flint and Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants where he received Preceptor of the Year Awards from both organizations. The honors require nominations by a Physician Assistant student and the preceptor must be chosen by the governing organization’s award committee.

“It’s an honor to share my knowledge and passion for working in community medicine with others,” explained David. “When students join me at the Hamilton Clinic, they learn more than medicine, they learn about compassion, collaboration, and the importance of treating the whole person.”
200k
Calls in 2022

1.6k
Calls Daily

6
Call Center Operators

Full-service care starts the moment you hear a call center representative say “Thank you for calling Hamilton Community Health Network. How may I help you?” All our calls are answered right here in the City of Flint in a free-standing facility set up specifically for our call center so we can serve our patients right, right from the start. Call center staff are required to know hundreds of extensions throughout the organization, our provider’s schedules, be familiar with processes and procedures within the medical field. Our Operators are skilled multi-taskers, empathetic, problem solvers, and above all – helpful. The next time you call to make an appointment, remember your care starts as soon as you hear a voice on the other end say, “Thank you.”

Thank you for calling Hamilton Community Health Network. How may I help you?”
– Camiya N., Customer Service Supervisor

BY THE NUMBERS: SERVICE VOLUME

Medical 70,778
Dental 12,720
Behavioral Health 3,614
Vision 2,383

Medical 48,981
Dental 12,730
Behavioral Health 1,529
Vision 2,085

89,505
TOTAL VISITS

65,623
IN-PERSON VISITS

23,882
TELEHEALTH VISITS

Note: All patient service data included in this community impact report is sourced from Hamilton’s calendar year 2021 Uniform Data System (UDS).

LEADERSHIP TEAM

From left to right: Dana Manns, Chief Financial Officer; Kirk Smith, Chief Administrative Officer; Richard Oldacre, Chief Operating Officer; Clarence Pierce, Chief Executive Officer; Michael Giacalone, Jr., MD, Chief Medical Officer; Lisa Rogers, Director of Human Resources; Stacy Sawyer, Director of Communications and Marketing.

Not pictured: Kimberly Warden, Director of Quality, Compliance and Risk Management; Dr. Anya Harris, Director of Dental Services.